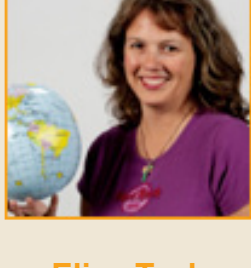




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The Travel Tip

Some pumpkin patches can get pretty dry and dusty so we recommend you wear a pair of jeans and tennis shoes if you're going to be pumpkin hunting. Also, if you have a small child, do bring some wet wipes to clean off dusty, dirty and sometimes apple-pie-smear faces.

Attention New England Fall Fans!



Hello travel fans. During the [August Travel Guiders](#) meeting we ended up having a lively discussion about travel that highlighted the adventures of one member's trip to Peru. What a memorable trip! He visited a number of exotic locations in a country not that many Americans have the chance to visit. We also discussed a few other members' memorable summer vacations in places like Switzerland and Oregon.

If you are not a member of Travel Guiders, I encourage you to join us at our next meeting scheduled for **September 21 at the Raley's Granite Bay location**. We will host Michelle Gamble-Risley who will give you her in-depth descriptions of the best attractions and regions to visit if you are interested in taking a trip to New England to enjoy the dramatic turn of the fall leaves. She has visited every New England state and spent almost a month at a time exploring the area. If you would like more information about Travel Guiders or to track events and updates, please go to the Meet-Up [website](#).

Track our World Less Traveled [blog](#) and read about family vacation destinations all over the map. We post new blogs two to three times a week, so be sure to follow the blog on a weekly basis.

Best,
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Fall into Fun!

As the warm summer days turn into fall crisp weather, kids go back to school, and families search for weekend fun, we have some wonderful regional suggestions to make your fall festivities a little more interesting and entertain the kids along the way. Following is a rundown of some great fall weekend adventures sure to please the entire family.



Apple Hill

If you live in the greater Sacramento area or beyond, chances are you've heard all about the famous Apple Hill located roughly eight miles up the road from Placerville, California on Highway 50. [Apple Hill](#) is not a single farm or orchard, it is an area filled with apple orchards, farms, ranches and numerous family attractions sure to delight the entire family. A favorite destination is [High Hill Farm](#) where for generations the owners have harvested all kinds of red and green apples and pumpkins. The sprawling ranch features riding in hay wagons, fishing in the pond, shopping at the open-air and indoor marts, riding ponies for the little ones, and walking through a number of arts-and-crafts vendor stands.



You can purchase fresh caramel or chocolate apples or apple donuts and fritters. And don't forget to stop at the restaurant and enjoy the BBQ chicken or hamburgers and have a yummy lunch with your family, saving room in your stomach to enjoy a scrumptious piece of apple or pumpkin pie. On your way out, do stop and pick up a frozen apple pie (sugar or sugar-free) to heat up in the oven at home to save and enjoy for later.

If you don't want to stay at High Hill Farms all day, grab a map available at most farms, and tour the area. Dozens of apple ranches and orchards are sprinkled around a 25-mile radius that stops near Pollock Pine up the road. Some of the ranches allow the public to go directly into the orchard to pick apples fresh off the trees. Other ranches have petting zoos and train rides. We recommend you take an entire day to explore the area and just make regular stops at orchards that look interesting. If you intend to make it a weekend excursion, do try out a stay at [Time Out](#) bed and breakfast and spa. It's centrally located from all of the area's ranches and gives your family a great place to stop and stay over and resume their apple explorations.

California Corn Mazes

A quirky and fun adventure involves finding a [corn maze](#) located in many areas in the San Joaquin Valley where corn growers are aplenty. One thing to know is that many corn mazes switch fields from year to year. Do not assume that just because you have searched for a particular corn maze on the Internet that you will find that maze still located in the exact same place. Do look at the date of the maze announcement to ensure it's still there and do call. Like all things living, maze locations often change with the crop planted in the area and crops rotate.

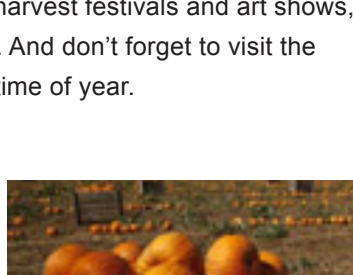


A really fun corn maze we've visited is in Hollister called [Swank Farms](#), which has all kinds of fun attractions including a petting farm, haunted house, hay-bail racing, pumpkin patch hunting and carving, and of course, the corn maze. What makes a corn maze fun is the challenge for the adults to find the exit. Now most corn mazes will warn you at the entrance to set aside a good two hours to get through it. What's particularly challenging if you've done one corn maze it won't necessarily be the same pattern the following year so that it provides a challenge to find your way out. Most of these mazes always offer a "cheat" exit if you get so stuck it's taking far longer than two hours and, say, you need to go home or to your lodging.

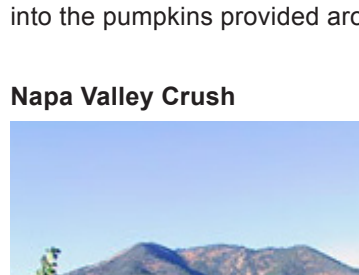
And now that you've driven as far as Hollister, keep going the additional 20 miles to Monterey to stay the night. A favorite overnight stay is at the [Portola Hotel and Spa](#), a beautiful facility located yards away from Fisherman's Wharf and less than a mile from the world-famous [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#). Portola Hotel is a four-star hotel that welcomes all families, with gorgeous rooms and French-door-enclosed balcony that overlooks the bay. The central coast in the fall is no longer as fogged in as late summer and you can expect some tepid, brisk cool days. Enjoy waking up in the morning to the distant barking of the sea lions. Be sure to check calendar listings for harvest festivals and art shows, which are usually scheduled for this time of year. And don't forget to visit the aquarium, which is always a joy no matter what time of year.

Pumpkin Patch Play Days

You can drive throughout most rural neighborhoods in California's heartland and find pumpkin patches all around. Most people have their personal favorites. If you're from the greater Sacramento area, you can drive up to Apple Hill and pick out a pumpkin from any number of patches or simply stay in town and visit our favorite, The Pumpkin Farm on old Auburn Blvd. It has the usual patch fare, including a haunted house and hay rides. Smaller children will enjoy the playground activities and slides and bounce houses while the entire family will find pleasure in a relaxing hay ride. The Pumpkin Farm provides tickets at a central shed-like facility in the front of the patch, and little ones can dive right into the pumpkins provided around the edge of the farm fields.



Napa Valley Crush



And finally no harvest season is left complete without a visit to [Napa Valley](#) during Crush, which has already gotten underway and completed toward the end of September. Most adults will enjoy wine tasting, but Napa offers many winery tours for the entire family to witness the wine fermentation process from vineyard to bottle.

A favorite tour can be found at [Domaine Chandon](#) that technically produces sparkling wine (champagne is only produced in France — one of the many tidbits you will uncover during the tour). Why [Domaine Chandon](#) stands out is for two reasons. The campus is gorgeous, green and abundant with trees and gardens. A creek runs through the property, and if with the permits allows a nice location to enjoy a picnic. Second, the restaurant inside is equally as stunning and glass-enclosed so you can gaze at the lovely landscape right outside of your window and dine on classic California cuisine.

And finally the tour is a lot of fun for family members of all ages. They will take you through the fermentation process to the cask room and finally onto the tasting room where you are welcome to enjoy a glass. Also, notice the gigantic bottle of sparkling wine out on display — enough to provide a glass or maybe even two for a large party. It's pretty amazing to look at. And even if you don't make Crush, which is particularly crowded anyway, it's still wonderful to tour Napa even in a brisk rain shower later in fall.